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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T QUITO 7854

EXDIS

FOR ARA--MR. MCNEIL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: SHUM ELAB EC
SUBJ: RECOMMENDATION OF DEMARCHE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, LABOR POLITICAL SITUATION

1. THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, WHICH HAD BEEN DETERIORATING SLOWLY IN THE LABOR SECTOR OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS AS A RESULT OF MAY STRIKES AND WHICH WAS DEALT A MAJOR SETBACK WITH THE GOE'S REACTION TO THE AZTRA INCIDENT, SEEMS TO HAVE STABILIZED A BIT IN THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS: IF IT IS NOT GETTING BETTER, AT LEAST IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE GROWING WORSE. AT THE SAME TIME, HOPES FOR THE PROCESS PROMISED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVOLVE POWER TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE THROUGH A COMPLICATED, BUT RATHER ADVANCED PROCESS, SUFFERED A SETBACK ON NOVEMBER 11 WHEN THE MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT REMOVED SOME OF THE AUTOMATICITY BUILT INTO THE PROCESS THEREBY CREATING A MORE UNCERTAIN PROSPECT FOR THE SCHEME. THE CONSPIRING OF SOME WELL-KNOWN POLITICIANS WITH THE MILITARY AIMED AT DITCHING THE REUTRN PROCESS HAS FURTHER CAST A CLOUD. (ALTHOUGH THIS HAD BEEN MITIGATED BY THE GOE'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PLOT RUMORS AND ITS RECOMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS ON NOV. 15 REPORTED SEPTEL).

2. IN AN EFFORT TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION THAT THE GOE HAS
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BEEN HEADING RECENTLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS, LABOR, AND RETURN TO DEMOCRACY, WE HAVE CARRIED OUT A SERIES OF ACTIONS:

--I HAVE MADE DEMARCHES BOTH TO ADMIRAL POVEDA AND GENERAL DURAN ON ALL THREE PROBLEMS, AND I HAVE HAD A LENGTHY CONVER-SATION WITH MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT JARRING (ON HIS INITIATIVE FOLLOWING THE POVEDA DEMARCHE), REGARDING THE AZTRA INCIDENT

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AND THE IMPRISONMENT OF LABOR LEADER JOSE CHAVEZ,

--THE LABOR OFFICER HAS MADE A DEMARCHE REGARDING CHAVEZ
ON THE UNDERSECRETARY OF LABOR,

--WE HAVE PROMOTED A VISIT BY AIFLD DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HADDAD ON THE IMPRISONED CHAVEZ AND SATISFIED OURSELVES THAT
ITS SUBSTANCE WAS REPORTED TO THE GOE,

--WE HAVE SOUGHT TO IDENTIFY CHAVEZ WITH THE INTER-
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMBER THROUGH THE PUBLICATION OF
RECENT PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWING CHAVEZ ASSOCIATING WITH AIFLD AND
ORIT OFFICIALS, THUS RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT GOE ASSERTION
THAT CHAVEZ IS COMMUNIST,

--WE HAVE DELIVERED TO CHAVEZ IN JAIL PICTURE TAKEN LAST
JUNE WITH MRS. CARTER WHICH WAS SIGNED BY MRS. CARTER,

--WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN ABOUT DISRUPTION OF RETORNO
PROCESS TO POLITICIANS BELIEVED TO BE INVOLVED IN
NEGOTIATIONS WITH MILITARY.

3. I BELIEVE THAT ALL OF THESE THINGS HAVE HELPED IN
SENSITIZING THE GOE TO THE INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR
ACTIONS, THE IMPORTANCE THAT WE PLACE ON THE FREEDOM OF
DEMOCRATIC LABOR LEADERS, AND THE INTEREST WE HAVE IN THE
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RETURN TO DEMOCRACY. ON THE RETORNO QUESTION, IT IS CONCEIVABLE
THAT OUR EFFORTS CONTRIBUTED TO DURAN'S APPARENT
DECISION TO BACK OFF FROM A DEAL TO REPLACE THE EXISTING
REGIME ON THE LABOR FRONT, AND SPECIFICALLY THE CASE OF
CHAVEZ, EITHER OUR EFFORTS HAVE NOT BEEN ENOUGHT SO FAR, OR
RESULTS THAT MIGHT STEM FROM THEM ARE TO BE DELAYED. I AM
STILL FAIRLY CONFIDENT AHT THE GOE HAS NOT YET LOCKED ITSELF
INTO A PATTERN OF HUMAN RIGHTS/LABOR ABUSES OR THE
INTERRUPTION OF THE RETURN PROCESS, AND THAT THE UNFORTUNATE
TENDENCIES IN THESE AREAS THAT WE HAVE COMMENTED ON CAN STILL
BE AFFECTED BY THE US AND INTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES. SINCE WE
FEEL THE EMBASSY HAS DONE ALL THAT IT CAN DO FOR THE TIME
BEING, I RECOMMEND THAT YOU (OR A HIGHER RANKING OFFICER,
DEPENDING ON YOUR JUDGMENT) NOW CONSIDER CALLING IN AMBASSADOR
YCAZA FOR A CHAT. WE KNOW THAT YCAZA HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY
UNFLAPPABLE IN THE PAST. OUR TACTIC SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO
CONVEY THE DEPT'S VIEWS WITH ENOUGHT GRAVITY TO PROMPT
HIM TO SEND BACK A MESSAGE SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO BE CONVEYED
VERBATIM TO THE SUPREME COUNCIL AND GIVE THEM FURTHER PAUSE.

4. WHEN DOING THIS I SUGGEST THAT YOU DRAW ON THE BASIC
FORMULATION THAT WE HAVE USED HERE, NOTING THE DEFINITE

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IMPROVEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR AND
OBSERVING HOW MUCH OF THE FAVORABLE TREATMENT THAT HAS BEEN
ACCORDED TO ECUADOR RECENTLY (ECUADOR-PERU BORDER QUESTION,
EXPEDITIOUS ARMS DELIVERIES, ACCESS TO SOFTLOAN WINDOW AT IBD)
CAN BE ATTIRBUTED TO HITHERTO GOOD RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS
AND PROMISE OF RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. I THINK
THAT WITHIN THAT CONTEXT YOU SHOULD NOTE THE SERIES OF
APPARENTLY REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST LABOR IN RECENT MONTHS
(DRAWING ONALLITTO'S MEMO TO TODMAN OF NOVEMBER 39. YOU
SHOULD MAKE THE POINT THAT REGARDLESS OF THE ALLEGED ILLEGALITY
OF THESE STRIKE/POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, AND PROCEDURES EMPLOYED
BY THE GOE IN IMPRISONING THE ACCUSED DO NOT MEET MINIMUM
STANDARDS OF DUE PROCESS, I.E., SENTENCING BY A POLICE
OFFICAL. YOU SHOULD THEN ZERO IN ON THE CHAVEZ CASE, AS
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SYMBOLIZING THIS SKEIN OF ANTI-LABOR EVENTS AND AS
A POSSIBLE CATALYST IN TURNING US PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE GOE.
I SUSPECT THAT GOE DOES NOT YET SUFFICIENTLY RECOGNIZE THE
IMPORTANCE OF GEORGE MEANY IN OUR POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND
THEREFORE THE IMPLICATION OF HIS PERSONAL IMTEREST IN THE
CHAVEZ CASE. THIS SHOULD BE DRIVEN HOME TO YCAZA.

5. SUCH A DEMARCHE ON YCAZA SHOULD REINFORCE MY OWN WARNINGS
TO POVEDA, DURAN, ET AL. AND IMPROVE THE CHANCES OF CHAVEZ'
EARLY RELEASE. IT ALSO SHOULD BE EHLPFUL IN TERMS OF THE
OVERALL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HERE AND PERHAPS HAVE SOME
POSITIVE SPILL-OVER ON OUR EFFORTS TO KEEP REOTRNO ON
TRACK.
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